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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Conor Murphy (Ireland), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.35

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994 and 49/22 B of 20 December 1994,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/47 A and 1995/47 B of 27 July 1995,

Concerned about the continued threat posed by natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on vulnerable communities, including their environments, particularly in developing countries,

Concerned also about the continuing threat posed by natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment,

Recalling the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness, and Mitigation, adopted by the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, on 27 May 1994, 1/

1/ See A/CONF.172/9, chap. I, annex I.

Taking into account already existing early-warning capacities within the United Nations system, in particular within the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

Conscious of the need to avoid duplication of work among United Nations bodies dealing with early-warning capacities,

Emphasizing that early warnings of impending natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment, linked to effective disaster preparedness measures and their effective dissemination, using, in particular, telecommunications, including broadcast services, are key factors to successful disaster prevention and preparedness,

Reaffirming that sustained economic growth and sustainable development are essential for the prevention of and preparedness for natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment and that special attention should be given to disaster prevention and preparedness by the Governments concerned as well as by the international community,

1. Notes the report of the Secretary-General on early-warning capacities of the United Nations system with regard to natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment; 2/

2. Commends the constructive inter-agency approach applied by the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, as part of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, and all concerned agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, which has led to this initial overview and analysis of early-warning concepts, capacities and gaps and to proposals for improvements in coordination and capacity-building with regard to such disasters;

3. Requests the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Decade to continue, within the scope of its work on early-warning capabilities, to examine and study new scientific and experimental concepts and methodologies for accurate and timely short-term forecasting of earthquakes, natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment with a view to making recommendations on their applicability and development in the context of international cooperation to improve preparedness for and minimize the risks of such disasters;

4. Takes note of the conclusions and proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report with respect to the improvement of early-warning capabilities, better international coordination in their use, and more effective and beneficial exchange of knowledge and technology;

5. Invites the Secretary-General, in particular, to facilitate, within the existing International Framework of Action for the International Decade for

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2/ A/50/526.

Natural Disaster Reduction, 3/ an internationally concerted framework for improvements in early-warning capacities by developing a concrete proposal for an effective international mechanism on early warning, to include the transfer of technologies related to early warning to developing countries, under the auspices of the United Nations and as part of the implementation of the Framework and the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action;

6. Also invites the Secretary-General to take the steps necessary to make the early-warning data gathered under the United Nations auspices readily available to the decision makers concerned at the international, national, regional and subregional levels;

7. Encourages all Governments to undertake, with the full support of the United Nations system, regular reviews of early-warning requirements and capabilities at their national and community levels, within the framework of the development of national disaster reduction policies in order to enhance protection of their national populations and assets;

8. Calls on the secretariat of the Decade to continue to facilitate a concerted international approach to improvements in early-warning capacities for natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment, within the process leading towards the closing event of the Decade;

9. Recommends that donor countries give greater priority to disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation in their assistance programmes and budgets, on either a bilateral or multilateral basis, by, inter alia, increasing contributions to the Trust Fund for the Decade, and promote and facilitate the transfer of technologies related to early warning to developing countries within the framework of implementing the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action;

10. Encourages improved efforts, in the context of international technical assistance and cooperation within the framework of implementing the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action, towards facilitating the availability of appropriate technology and reliable data, along with the corresponding training, and access to network systems related to early warning, particularly to developing countries;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

3/ See General Assembly resolution 44/236, annex.